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THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER

From  
Arthur D. Osborne



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MAJOR GENERAL ALFRED H. TERRY, U. S. A.

From the portrait in Memorial Hall at Hartford

## THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER

BY

Major General ALFRED H. TERRY,

## AND WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHED

BY

ARTHUR D. OSBORNE

*Read before the New Haven Colony Historical Society,*

October 23, 1911

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## THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER

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While we would forget the animosities and the bitterness aroused by the Civil War, we should never forget those brave men whose valor and sacrifices brought us safely out of that fierce conflict. And it seems eminently fit that a great achievement, by a distinguished soldier, whose home was in New Haven, should receive full recognition in the records of the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

It was forty-six years on the 15th of last January since Fort Fisher was captured. Some of us remember the exultant thrill we felt when the telegraph flashed the message to his fellow townsmen, "General Terry has taken Fort Fisher," but to the majority of the people in this community that event is now only history. And it is not only our duty but a pleasure from time to time to recall the great deeds of such men, and of those who served under them, that the coming generations may learn to remember and honor them so long as the country which they preserved shall endure.

It is not the object of this paper to give an account of the long and arduous service of General Terry throughout the Civil War and during the reconstruction of the revolted states as military governor of Virginia and also of Georgia, where he was sent to deal with a difficult and critical situation, nor of his later career, during which by his ability and scholarly attainments he rose to the highest place in the esteem of his brother officers. Nor would the prescribed limits of this paper permit it. It is only intended to describe clearly and concisely a great military operation, remarkable for the perfection of its plans in every detail and the celerity and completeness of its success and also to point out some of the important results that were secured by it.

That the capture of Fort Fisher may be fully appreciated and understood a brief survey of the events which preceded and followed it is proper and perhaps necessary.

Immediately after hostilities began, by the attack on Fort Sumter, President Lincoln, on the 19th and 27th of April, 1861, proclaimed a blockade of the entire Southern coast. Every available vessel of war was employed and many merchant vessels fitted out as gunboats to enforce the blockade. To make the blockade more effective, expeditions were despatched to occupy all the available places on the coast. But in spite of all the measures adopted and although great numbers of blockade runners were captured or destroyed, blockade running was continued. The proximity of Nassau and Bermuda, the rendezvous of these vessels, to the Southern ports, and the enormous profits of a successful venture, in the exchange of arms, ammunition and materials of war for cotton, were powerful inducements to run the risk of capture or destruction and many succeeded in going in and out of Southern ports. The Secretary of the Navy, in his report after the war, stated that the number of blockade runners captured was 1,151, and the number destroyed 355, making in all 1,506.

Gradually the occupation of the entrance to the Southern ports by our troops and the closer approach of the blockading squadrons practically had closed all of them of any importance except Cape Fear River and the harbor of Wilmington, which was defended by the strong works of Fort Fisher and many others. The Secretary of the Navy states in his report in December, 1865, that, "as early in the war as 1862 the necessity of closing the port of Wilmington became a work of primary importance with this department and was never relinquished, but without military aid and coöperation it could not be effected." In September, 1864, the department had such assurance of military assistance as warranted entering upon the necessary preparations for assembling an adequate naval force. Rear Admiral Porter, who had shown great ability as the commander of the Mississippi squadron and had identified himself with many of

its most important achievements, was transferred to the North Atlantic squadron, which included within its limits Cape Fear River and the port of Wilmington.

The Richmond *Despatch*, between the date of the first attack and the second, showed the importance of the port of Wilmington to the Confederacy in the following article: "The special report of the Secretary of the Treasury in relation to the matter shows that there have been imported into the Confederacy, at the ports of Wilmington and Charleston, since October 20th, 1864, 8,652,000 pounds of meat, 1,507,000 pounds of lead, 1,933,000 pounds of saltpetre, 546,000 pairs of shoes, 316,000 pairs of blankets, 520,000 pounds of coffee, 69,000 rifles, 97 packages of revolvers, 2,639 packages of medicine, 43 cannon, with a large quantity of other articles of which we need make no mention. It is a matter of absolute impossibility for the Federals to stop our blockade running at the port of Wilmington. If the wind blows off the coast the blockading fleet is driven off. If the wind blows landward they are compelled to haul off to a great distance." The amount of importations above described was brought in in less than three months.

For the first attack a fleet of naval vessels, surpassing in numbers and equipment any which had assembled during the war, was collected with despatch at Hampton Roads. It was not until the early part of December, 1864, that the expedition departed for Beaufort, North Carolina, the place of rendezvous. On the 24th of December, Rear Admiral Porter with a bombarding force of thirty-seven vessels, five of which were iron-clads, and a reserve force of nineteen vessels, attacked the forts at the mouth of Cape Fear River, and silenced them in an hour and a quarter; but there being no troops to make an assault, nothing beyond the injury inflicted on the works and on the garrison was accomplished by the bombardment. A renewed attack was made the next day and the forts were silenced, but no assault was made or attempted by the troops which had been disembarked for that purpose. Major General Butler, who commanded the coöperating force, consisting of 6,500 infantry,

two batteries of artillery and a few cavalry, after a reconnoissance, came to the conclusion that the place could not be carried by an assault. He therefore reëmbarked and, informing Rear Admiral Porter of his intention, returned with his command to Hampton Roads. Rear Admiral Porter remained in the vicinity with his force awaiting military aid and, confident that with adequate military coöperation the fort could be carried, he asked it and earnestly requested that the enterprise should not be abandoned. In this the Department and the President fully concurred. Of this Lieutenant General Grant was advised and he promptly detailed a second military force composed of about eight thousand five hundred men under the command of Major General Alfred H. Terry. This officer arrived off Fort Fisher on the 13th of January, 1865. Meantime the fort had received a considerable reinforcement.

General Terry was admirably fitted to command such an expedition. He had already acquired some knowledge of military affairs, when at the outbreak of the Civil War he was commissioned Colonel of the Second Regiment Connecticut Militia to serve three months and left with that regiment for Washington, May 10th, 1861, participating in the battle of Bull Run; and on the expiration of its term of service, on his return to Connecticut, was immediately commissioned Colonel of the Seventh Connecticut Regiment, volunteers for three years or the war. This regiment formed part of the force which was despatched to occupy the islands on the coast of South Carolina and sailed for Port Royal October 29th, 1861. He took part in the siege of Fort Pulaski, near Savannah, and upon its surrender was made brigadier general of volunteers. He engaged in the siege of Fort Wagner and after the failure of the first two assaults was assigned to lead the assaulting column in the third attempt, but at daylight of the morning when it was to be made, the fort was found to have been evacuated in the night. He told the writer that his experience there was of the greatest advantage to him in planning and executing the attack on Fort Fisher. At the opening of the campaign of 1864 he was transferred, with his





ALFRED H. TERRY



command, to the forces in front of Petersburg and commanded a division in the 10th Corps and at one time commanded the 10th Corps.

In the summer of 1864, the 10th Corps had many severe engagements on the north side of the James River and in front of the defenses of Petersburg and Richmond. He had been therefore nearly four years in active service in the field, in battles, in sieges and maneuvers, and moreover had studied thoroughly the great campaigns of many wars and the best authors on military science.

Fort Fisher was situated on the peninsula between the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean, about twenty-two miles below Wilmington. It consisted of two fronts, the land front running across the peninsula about 480 yards long, the sea front running parallel to the beach about 1,300 yards. The parapet on the land side was 25 feet thick and 20 feet high, with traverses rising ten feet above it, running back 30 to 40 feet and being 8 to 12 feet thick. It was defended by a garrison of 2,500 men under the command of Colonel Lamb. There were in place for its defense 75 heavy guns, some of them Armstrong guns with the "broad arrow" and Sir William Armstrong's name on them. It was surrounded by a wet ditch 15 feet wide with a stockade extending from the fort to the sea on one side and from the salient to the marsh on the other.

The official report of General Terry gives so clear and concise an account of the whole affair that it is here inserted nearly in full, omitting only some of the details.

#### HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES FORCES ON FEDERAL POINT, N. C.,

January 25th, 1865.

GENERAL:—I have the honor to submit the following detailed report of the operations which resulted in the capture of Fort Fisher and the occupation of Fort Caswell, and the other works at the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

On the 2d instant I received from the Lieutenant-General in person orders to take command of the troops destined for the move-

ment. They were 3,300 picked men from the second division of the Twenty-fourth Army corps, under Brigadier-General Adelbert Ames, the same number from the Third division of the Twenty-fifth Army corps, under the command of Brigadier-General Charles J. Paine, 1,400 men from the second brigade of the First division of the Twenty-fourth Army corps, under Colonel J. C. Abbott, 7th New Hampshire Volunteers, the Sixteenth New York Independent Battery with four 3-inch guns, and Light Battery E, Third United States Artillery, with six light 12-pounder guns. I was instructed to move them from their positions in the lines on the north side of the James River to Bermuda Landing, in time to commence their embarkation on transport vessels at sunrise on the 4th instant.

In obedience to these orders, the movement commenced at noon of the 3d instant. The troops arrived at the landing at sunset and there bivouacked for the night.

The transports did not arrive as soon as they were expected. The first of them made its appearance late in the afternoon of the 4th. One of them, the *Atlantic*, was of too heavy draught to come up the James; Curtis' brigade of Ames' division was therefore placed on river steamboats and sent down the river to be transferred to her.

The embarkation of the remainder of the force commenced at sunset of the 4th and was completed at noon of the 5th instant; each vessel, as soon as it was loaded, was sent to Fort Monroe, and at 9 o'clock P. M. of the 5th the whole fleet was collected in Hampton Roads. The troops were all in heavy marching order with four days' rations from the morning of the 4th in their haversacks, and forty rounds of ammunition in their boxes.

I went down the river personally with the Lieutenant-General, and on the way received from him additional instructions, and the information that orders had been given for the embarkation of a siege train with a detail of artillerists and a company of engineers, so that in case siege operations should become necessary the men and material for it might be at hand.

These troops, under the command of Brevet Brigadier-General H. L. Abbott, were to follow me to Beaufort, North Carolina, and await orders. It was not until this time that I was informed that Fort Fisher was the point against which we were to operate.

During the evening of the 5th orders were given for the transports to proceed to sea at four o'clock the next morning, and accom-

panying these orders were sealed letters, to be opened when off Cape Henry, directing them to rendezvous, in case of separation from the flagship, at a point twenty-five miles off Beaufort, North Carolina.

The vessels sailed at the appointed hour. During the 6th instant a severe storm arose, which so much impeded our progress that it was not until the morning of the 8th that my own vessel arrived at the rendezvous; all the others, excepting the flagship of General Paine, were still behind.

During the 8th nearly all of the vessels arrived at the rendezvous; some of them required repairs to their hulls, damaged by the gale, some repairs to their machinery, others needed coal or water. These vessels were brought into the harbor or to the outer anchorage, where their wants were supplied; all the others remained, until the final sailing of the expedition, some twenty to twenty-five miles off the land. The weather continued so unfavorable as to afford no prospect that we would be able to make a landing on the open beach of Federal Point until Wednesday, the 11th. On that day Admiral Porter proposed to start, but at high water there was still so much surf on the bar that the iron-clads and other vessels of heavy draught could not be gotten over it; our departure was therefore delayed till the next day.

On the morning tide of the 12th the vessels in the harbor passed out, and the whole fleet of naval vessels and transports got under way for this place. As we were leaving, the vessels containing General Abbott's command came in sight; orders were sent to them to follow us.

We did not arrive off Federal Point until nearly night-fall, consequently, and in accordance with the decision of the Admiral, the disembarkation of the troops was not commenced until the next morning. Our subsequent experience fully justified the delay; it would have been extremely difficult to land the men at night.

At 4 o'clock A. M. of the 13th, the inshore division of naval vessels stood in close to the beach to cover the landing. The transports followed them and took positions as nearly as possible in a line parallel to and about two hundred yards outside of them. The iron-clads moved down to within range of the fort and opened fire upon it. Another division was placed to the northward of the landing place, so as to protect our men from any attack from the direction of Masonboro' Inlet. At 8 o'clock nearly 200 boats, besides steam tugs, were sent from the Navy to the transports, and

the disembarkation of men, provisions, tools and ammunition simultaneously commenced.

At 3 o'clock P. M. nearly 8,000 men, with three day's rations in their haversacks, and 40 rounds of ammunition in their boxes, six days' supply of hard bread in bulk, 300,000 additional rounds of small-arm ammunition, and a sufficient number of entrenching tools, had been safely landed. The surf on the beach was still quite high, notwithstanding that the weather had become very pleasant: and owing to it some of the men had their rations and ammunition ruined by water; with this exception, no accident of any kind occurred.

As soon as the troops had commenced landing, pickets were thrown out; they immediately encountered outposts of the enemy, and shots were exchanged with them, but no serious engagement occurred. A few prisoners were taken, from whom I learned that Hoke's Rebel division, which it was supposed had been sent further South, was still here, and that it was his outposts which we were meeting.

The first object which I had in view after landing was to throw a strong defensive line across the peninsula from Cape Fear River to the sea, facing Wilmington, so as to protect our rear from attack while we should be engaged in operating against Fisher. Our maps indicated that a good position for such a line would be found a short distance above the head of Myrtle Sound, which is a long shallow piece of water separated from the ocean by a sand spit of about 100 yards in width, and communicates with it by Masonboro' Inlet.

It was supposed that the right flank of a line at that point would be protected by the sound, and, being above its head, that we should by it control the beach as far as the inlet, and thus, in case of need, be able to land supplies in quiet water there. Our landing place was selected with reference to this idea. An examination made after we landed showed that the sound for a long distance above its head was so shallow as to offer no obstacle to the passage of troops at low tide, and as the farther down the peninsula we should go the shorter would be our line across it, it was determined to take up a position where the maps showed a large pond occupying nearly one-third of the width of the peninsula at about three miles from the fort. Shortly before five o'clock, leaving Abbott's brigade to cover our stores, the troops were put in motion for the last-named

point. On arriving at it, the "pond" was found to be a sand-flat, sometimes covered with water, giving no assistance to the defense of a line established behind it. Nevertheless, it was determined to get a line across at this place, and Paine's division, followed by two of Ames' brigades, made their way through. The night was very dark, much of the ground was a marsh, and illy adapted to the construction of works, and the distance was found to be too great to be properly defended by troops which could be spared from the direct attack upon the fort. It was not until 9 o'clock P. M. that Paine succeeded in reaching the river.

The ground still nearer the fort was then reconnoitered and found to be much better adapted to our purposes; accordingly, the troops were withdrawn from their last position and established on a line about two miles from the works. They reached this final position at 2 o'clock A. M. of the 14th instant. Tools were immediately brought up and the entrenchments were commenced. At 8 o'clock a good breastwork, reaching from the river to the sea, and partially covered by abattis, had been constructed and was in a defensible condition. It was much improved afterward, but from this time our foothold on the peninsula was secured.

Early in the morning of the 14th, the landing of the artillery was commenced, and by sunset all the light guns were gotten on shore. During the following night they were placed on the line, most of them near the river, where the enemy, in case he should attack us, would be least exposed to the fire of the gunboats.

Curtis' brigade of Ames' division was moved down toward Fisher during the morning, and at noon his skirmishers, after capturing on their way a small steamer which had come down the river with shells and forage for the garrison of the fort, reached a small unfinished outwork in front of the west end of the land front of the work.

General Curtis, Lieutenant-Colonel Comstock, the chief engineer of the expedition, and myself, under the protection of the fire of the fleet, made a careful reconnoissance of the work, getting within six hundred yards of it.

As the result of this reconnoissance, and in view of the extreme difficulty which might be expected in landing supplies and the material for a siege on the open and often tempestuous beach, it was decided to attempt an assault the next day, provided that in the meantime the fire of the Navy should so far destroy the palisades as to make one practicable.

This decision was communicated to Admiral Porter, who at once placed a division of his vessels in a position to accomplish this last-named object. It was arranged in consultation with him that a heavy bombardment from all the vessels should commence early in the morning and continue up to the moment of the assault, and that even then it should not cease, but should be diverted from the points of attack to other parts of the work.

It was decided that the assault should be made at 3 o'clock P. M.; that the Army should attack on the western half of the land face, and that a column of sailors and marines should assault at the northeast bastion.

The fire of the Navy continued during the night. At 8 o'clock A. M. of the 15th all of the vessels, except a division left to aid in the defence of our northern line, moved into position, and a fire, magnificent alike for its power and accuracy, was opened.

Ames' division had been selected for the assault. Paine was placed in command of the defensive line, having with him Abbott's brigade in addition to his own division. Ames' first brigade—Curtis'—was already at the outwork above-mentioned, and in trenches close around it; his other two brigades, Pennypacker's and Bell's, were moved at noon to within supporting distance of him.

At 2 o'clock preparations for the assault were commenced. Sixty sharpshooters from the Thirteenth Indiana Volunteers, armed with the Spencer repeating carbine, and forty others, volunteers from Curtis' brigade, the whole number under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Lent, of the Thirteenth Indiana, were thrown forward at a run to within 175 yards of the work. They were provided with shovels, and soon dug pits for shelter, and commenced firing at the parapet.

As soon as this movement commenced the parapet of the fort was manned and the enemy's fire, both of musketry and artillery, opened.

As soon as the sharpshooters were in position Curtis' brigade was moved forward by regiment at the double-quick into line at about 475 yards from the work. The men there laid down. This was accomplished under a sharp fire of musketry and artillery, from which, however, they soon sheltered themselves by digging shallow trenches.

When Curtis moved from the outwork Pennypacker was brought up to it, and Bell was brought into line 200 yards in his rear. Finding that a good cover for Curtis' men could be found on the reverse



slope of a crest 60 yards in the rear of the sharpshooters, they were again moved forward, one regiment at a time, and again covered themselves in trenches. Pennypacker followed Curtis and occupied the ground vacated by him, and Bell was brought up to the outwork.

It had been proposed to blow up and cut down the palisades; bags of powder, with fuses attached, had been prepared, and a party of volunteer axemen organized; but the fire of the Navy had been so effective during the preceding night and morning that it was thought unnecessary to use the powder. The axemen, however, were sent in with the leading brigade, and did good service by making openings in portions of the palisading which the fire of the Navy had not been able to reach.

At 3.25 P. M. all the preparations were completed, the order to move forward was given to Ames, and a concerted signal was made to Admiral Porter to change the direction of his fire.

Curtis' brigade at once sprung from their trenches and dashed forward in line; its left was exposed to a severe enfilading fire, and it obliques to the right so as to envelope the left of the land front; the ground over which it moved was marshy and difficult, but it soon reached the palisades, passed through them, and effected a lodgment on the parapet. At the same time the column of sailors and marines, under Fleet Captain K. R. Breese, advanced up the beach in the most gallant manner and attacked the northeast bastion; but, exposed to a murderous fire, they were unable to get up the parapet. After a severe struggle and a heavy loss of valuable officers and men, it became apparent that nothing could be effected at that point, and they were withdrawn. When Curtis moved forward, Ames directed Pennypacker to move up to the rear of the sharpshooters, and brought Bell up to Pennypacker's late position, and as soon as Curtis got a foothold on the parapet sent Pennypacker in to his support. He advanced, overlapping Curtis' right, and drove the enemy from the heavy palisading, which extended from the west end of the land face to the river, capturing a considerable number of prisoners; then pushing forward to their left, the two brigades together drove the enemy from about one quarter of the land face. Ames then brought up Bell's brigade, and moved it between the work and the river. On this side there was no regular parapet, but there was an abundance of cover afforded to the enemy by cavities from which sand had been taken for the parapet, the ruins of barracks and storehouses, the large magazine, and by traverses behind which they

stubbornly resisted our advance. Hand to hand fighting of the most desperate character ensued, the huge traverses of the land face being used successively by the enemy as breastworks, over the tops of which the contending parties fired in each other's faces. Nine of these were carried one after the other by our men.

When Bell's brigade was ordered into action I foresaw that more troops would probably be needed, and sent an order for Abbott's brigade to move down from the north line, at the same time requesting Captain Breese to replace them with his sailors and marines. I also directed General Paine to send me one of the strongest regiments of his own division; these troops arrived at dusk and reported to General Ames. At 6 o'clock, Abbott's brigade went into the fort; the regiment from Paine's division—the Twenty-seventh United States colored troops, Brevet Brigadier-General A. M. Blackman commanding—was brought up to the rear of the work, where it remained under fire for some time and was then withdrawn. Until 6 o'clock the fire of the Navy continued upon that portion of the work not occupied by us; after that time it was directed on the beach, to prevent the coming up of reinforcements, which it was thought might possibly be thrown over from the right bank of the river to Battery Buchanan. The fighting for the traverses continued till nearly 9 o'clock, two more of them being carried; then a portion of Abbott's brigade drove the enemy from their last remaining stronghold, and the occupation of the work was completed.

The same brigade, with General Blackman's regiment, were immediately pushed down the Point to Battery Buchanan, whither many of the garrison had fled. On reaching the battery all of the enemy who had not been previously captured were made prisoners. Among them were Major-General Whiting, and Colonel Lamb, the commandant of the fort.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon Hoke advanced against our north line, apparently with the design of attacking it; but if such was his intention he abandoned it after a skirmish with our pickets.

During the day Brevet Brigadier-General H. L. Abbott, Chief of Artillery, was busily engaged in landing artillery and ammunition, so that if the assault failed siege operations might at once be commenced. (The First Connecticut Heavy Artillery formed part of this force.)

Consequent to the fall of Fisher, the enemy, during the night of the 16th and 17th, blew up Fort Caswell, and abandoned both it and their very extensive works on Smith's Island, at Smithville and Reeve's Point, thus placing in our hands all the works erected to defend the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

In all the works were found 169 pieces of artillery, nearly all of which are heavy, over 2,000 stands of small-arms, considerable quantities of commissary stores, and full supplies of ammunition. Our prisoners numbered 112 commissioned officers and 1,971 enlisted men.

I have no words to do justice to the behavior of both officers and men on this occasion; all that men could do they did. Better soldiers never fought. Of General Ames I have already spoken in a letter recommending his promotion. He commanded all the troops engaged and was constantly under fire. His great coolness, good judgment, and skill were never more conspicuous than on this assault. Brigadier-General Curtis and Colonels Pennypacker, Bell, and Abbott—the brigade commanders—led them with the utmost gallantry. Curtis was wounded after fighting in the front rank, rifle in hand; Pennypacker, while carrying the standard of one of his regiments, the first man in a charge over a traverse. Bell was mortally wounded near the palisades.

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I should signally fail to do my duty were I to omit to speak in terms of the highest admiration of the part borne by the Navy in our operations. In all ranks, from Admiral Porter to his seamen, there was the utmost desire not only to do their proper work, but to facilitate in every possible manner the operations of the land forces. To him and to the untiring efforts of his officers and men are we indebted that our men, stores, tools, and ammunition were safely and expeditiously landed, and that our wounded and prisoners were embarked for transportation to the North; to the great accuracy and power of their fire it is owing that we had not to confront a formidable artillery in the assault, and that we were able with but little loss to push forward the men, preparatory to it, to a point nearly as favorable for it as the one they would have occupied had siege operations been undertaken and the work systematically approached. The assault of the sailors and marines, although it failed, undoubtedly contributed somewhat to our success, and certainly nothing

could surpass the perfect skill with which the fleet was handled by its commander. Every request which I made to Admiral Porter was most cheerfully complied with, and the utmost harmony has existed between us from the outset to the present time.

I forward herewith General Ames' report.

I have the honor to be, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALFRED H. TERRY,

*Major-General.*

Brigadier-General I. A. Rawlins, Chief of Staff, City Point, Virginia.

(The 6th and 7th Connecticut Regiments formed part of the troops who made the assault.)

COMPLIMENTARY LETTER OF REAR-ADMIRAL PORTER IN REGARD TO GENERAL TERRY.

NORTH ATLANTIC SQUADRON,

U. S. FLAG-SHIP MALVERN,

OFF SMITHVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA,

January 20, 1865.

SIR:—I have been so much pleased with General Terry, and the manner in which he has conducted his part of the operations here, that I deem it worthy of a special despatch to express what I feel.

General Terry is, no doubt, well known to his associates in the field, who have served with him, and to the lieutenant general who selected him for the service, but the American people should know and feel the very great service he has rendered them by his most admirable assault on these tremendous works. Young, brave, and unassuming, he bears his success with the modesty of a true soldier, and is willing to give credit to those who shared with him the perils of the assault. No one could form the slightest conception of these works, their magnitude, strength, and extent, who had not seen them, and General Whiting (the founder) must have had an abiding faith in the durability of the Confederacy when he expended so many years' labor on them.

The result of the fall of Fort Fisher was the fall of all the surrounding works in and near this place—Fort Caswell, a large work at the West inlet, mounting twenty-nine guns, all the works on

Smith's Island, the works between Caswell and Smithville up to battery on Reeve's Point, on west side of the river—in all one hundred and sixty-nine guns falling into our hands; two steamers were burnt or blown up, and there never was so clean a scoop made anywhere.

A timid man would have hesitated to attack these works by assault, no matter what assistance he may have had from other quarters, but General Terry never for an instant hesitated; and though I feel somewhat flattered at the confidence he reposed in my judgment, I am quite ready to believe that he acted on his own ideas of what was proper to be done in the matter, and was perfectly qualified to judge without the advice of anyone.

Throughout this affair his conduct has been marked by the greatest desire to be successful, not for the sake of personal considerations, but for the cause in which we are all alike engaged.

I don't know that I ever met an officer who so completely gained my esteem and admiration.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,  
*Rear-Admiral.*

The Confederate General Whiting testified to the Committee on the conduct of the war: "The work was very strong, the garrison in good spirits and ready and the fire on the approaches, the assaulting column having no cover, would have been very heavy. In addition to the heavy guns, I had a battery of Napoleons, on which I placed great reliance. The palisades alone were a most formidable obstacle."

Captain Breese of the Navy testified: "I know that at three o'clock in the afternoon the last provisions and the last man of the command which General Terry brought there were landed. Everything seemed to betoken great energy on the part of General Terry and in the way the men went to work in every respect. As soon as they got ashore, we saw them organize and march off and in a short time General Terry had thrown up a line of defensive works across the point and had captured a small steamer."

In another report, Admiral Porter says: "General Terry himself went into the fort and I kept up constant communication with him, until three hearty cheers, which were taken up by the fleet, announced the capture of Fort Fisher."

"General Butler says that the fire of the Navy did keep the enemy in his bombproofs but feared it would keep his men out when they attempted to assault. General Terry was influenced by no such fear; on the contrary, we fired twenty yards ahead of our troops while they were fighting from bombproof to bombproof and the General constantly signalled, 'Fire away, your shells are doing good execution and our men are in no danger.'"

General Sherman, advancing through the Carolinas, had put Charleston in possession of our forces and Wilmington was the only port through which supplies to Lee's army could now come from abroad. A telegram was picked up in the fort from General Lee to his subordinate saying that if Forts Fisher and Caswell are not held he would have to evacuate Richmond. Four blockade runners from Bermuda came in after the capture of Fort Fisher loaded with supplies for Lee's army, with five English passengers on board, one an English army officer. They said they came over "on a lark and were making themselves quite jolly with their champagne over their safe arrival." Anyone who has read Mrs. Roger A. Pryor's account of the conditions in Richmond at this time will appreciate the value of the supplies through this source. The importance of this great success was not limited to the closing of Wilmington harbor. Both the President and General Grant felt great anxiety lest Lee, evacuating Richmond and Petersburg, might elude the army of the Potomac and, effecting a junction with General Johnston in North Carolina, fall suddenly upon the army of General Sherman and, perhaps defeating it, enable Lee and Johnston to prolong the war indefinitely. General Terry being reinforced with two divisions from the 10th Corps, prepared to open communications with General Sherman as soon as possible. Cox's division of the 25th also arriving was placed on the opposite side

of the river. About the middle of February, offensive operations were resumed in the direction of Wilmington, the vessels and troops moving up the river in concert. On the 11th of February Terry had advanced with two divisions, Ames' and Paine's colored division, and had met with serious resistance. The defences of Wilmington included nineteen forts and batteries, all of the heaviest character and scientifically constructed and thoroughly armed. Besides these there were three lines of obstructions consisting of piles, torpedoes, sunken ships, cribs and chains, and rafts of heavy timber fastened together. About two miles below the city a second line of defences was constructed and the front of this line was covered by a succession of ponds and deep swamps crossed only by two narrow causeways. By skillful maneuvering the enemy were forced out of these defences, without serious loss to our men, and on the 21st of February General Terry occupied Wilmington.

General Sherman having reached Fayetteville, North Carolina, might have turned eastward to Wilmington, about seventy miles distant, where he would have secured a safe base, with reinforcements to his army and abundant supplies. He however decided to push boldly on to Goldsboro, intending to concentrate there all the troops which had been sent to reinforce him. General Schofield, with the 23d Corps had been ordered east and had arrived at Newberne, North Carolina. Goldsboro is about fifty miles north-easterly from Fayetteville, about seventy miles north of Wilmington and fifty miles westerly from Newberne. A railroad connected these two places. General Terry, having received word that Sherman's army was at Fayetteville, despatched a steam tug up the Cape Fear River, to inform of the situation.

General Sherman thus describes the result, "Sunday, March 12th, was a day of Sabbath stillness in Fayetteville. Shortly after noon was heard in the distance the shrill whistle of a steamboat, which came nearer and nearer, and soon a shout, long and continuous, was raised down by the river, which spread farther and farther, and we all felt that it meant a messenger from home. The effect was

electric. But in a few minutes came up through the town, behind a group of officers, a large, florid seafaring man, named Ainsworth, bearing a small mail-bag from General Terry. Intense anxiety had been felt for our safety and General Terry had been prompt to open communication. I directed General Terry and General Schofield with the 23d Corps to meet me at Goldsboro and on the 22d of March I rode to Cox's Bridge, where I met General Terry with his two divisions of the 10th Corps and the next day rode into Goldsboro, where I met General Schofield with the 23d Corps, thus effecting a junction of all the army as originally planned. Our couriers had got through safely and this was the prompt reply." Replying to Terry's message, General Sherman in his despatch said: "I thank you for the energetic action that has marked your course and shall be most happy to meet you."

The advance of the 23d Corps from Newberne was stubbornly resisted by the Confederate forces under General Bragg and at Kinston a severe engagement occurred in which the 15th Connecticut suffered a heavy loss and Major Walter Osborn of New Haven was mortally wounded and taken prisoner. Major Osborn had served through the war from the beginning and was much beloved in New Haven, where he had many friends, and his death was greatly lamented, and the more because it occurred so near the end of the war and for the belief that his life could have been saved by proper care. The movement of General Sherman towards Goldsboro, after two severe engagements with the army of General Johnston, relieved the resistance to the 23d Corps, which soon after entered Goldsboro and the three coöperating armies were concentrated there.

Says General Sherman, "It was evident to me that there was now no force that could delay our progress, unless General Lee should succeed in eluding General Grant at Petersburg and make junction with Johnston and thus united meet me alone. And now that we had effected a junction with General Terry and General Schofield, I had no fear even of that."



General Grant stated in his report at the close of the war, that the capture of Fort Fisher was one of the most important successes of the war.

Thus ended one of the most perfectly planned and brilliantly executed operations of the Civil War.

Both Houses of Congress by an unanimous vote passed a resolution thanking General Terry and his command, as follows: "To Brevet Major General A. H. Terry and the officers and soldiers under his command, for the unsurpassed gallantry and skill exhibited by them in the attack upon Fort Fisher and the brilliant decisive victory by which that important work has been captured from the rebel forces and placed in the possession of the United States, and for their long and faithful service and unwavering devotion for the cause of the country in the midst of the greatest difficulties and dangers."

General Terry was commissioned by President Lincoln a Brigadier General in the Regular Army of the United States and in 1886 was promoted to be a Major General.



















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